

ACTIVE TRANSPORT TO SCHOOL: A STUDY OF POLITICAL BARRIERS IN GLEN EIRA

Danita Tucker, John Stone

Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning, University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

INTRODUCTION

The benefits of children travelling to and from school by active means are far-reaching. They include physical and mental health, social and community benefits in addition to reduced congestion on roads. The State Government estimates that, in Melbourne, more than 60% of school children are driven to school even though 44% of these trips are less than 2km (State of Victoria, 2010). Motorised travel to and from school accounts for over 20% of cars between 8.30 and 9am on weekday mornings (Morris, Wang, & Lilja, 2001). Active transport has the potential to make a significant contribution to a child's physical activity in the form of incidental exercise as they travel to and from school. Yet, transport policy is dominated by a focus on the fast and efficient movement of motorised vehicles.

Much of the literature on this issue focuses on why there is a need for Active Transport to School (ATS) policies and programs and the format they could take. Instead, this paper focuses on the micro-politics of implementing ATS policy and programs using case studies from Melbourne; exploring reasons for variation in outcomes despite the existence of articulated active transport policies at federal, state and local government in Australia.

The paper further examines actor behaviour and institutional cultures in the processes of ATS policy implementation in local government through an investigation of the Cities of Glen Eira and Boroondara, two middle-ring Melbourne council areas with quite different ATS outcomes. Boroondara experienced an eight-fold growth (from 891 to 7,278) in ATS participation between 2008 and 2010 whilst over the same period ATS participation in Glen Eira declined by 23% (from 5,442 to 4,187) (Bicycle Victoria, 2010b). Exposure to State government policy and other external influences are the same for both organisations. So, it can be presumed that the key differentiating factors relate to the processes of policy implementation at the local government level.

Two conceptual models of the policy implementation process shaped the investigation. The *institutionalist model* focuses on an organisation's rationale for policy development and implementation. The *policy network* model draws attention to the relationship between local government officials and external parties. Using these models, the investigation analysed policy documents and interpreted evidence gathered through in-depth qualitative interviews with key actors.

ATS- Benefits and Barriers

Active travel has a range of benefits encompassing health, educational, community, environmental, time and reduced congestion. Physically active children are found to be healthier, happier and more socially connected than children with sedentary lives (Garrard, 2009; US Department of Health and Human Services, 2008; World Health Organisation (WHO), 2010). Despite this, in recent decades active transport has declined as car travel has become the dominant mode of transport (Garrard, 2009; Salmon et al., 2005).

Despite the widely acknowledged benefits of ATS, there are many barriers to ATS participation. Children's active transport and outdoor play are being restricted due to parental concerns about road safety and 'stranger danger', risk of abduction by strangers. Such concerns highlight the need for an improvement in infrastructure to enhance road safety that may help to promote physical activity among children in their local neighbourhoods (Carver, Timperio, Hesketh, & Crawford, 2010). In addition, there is a perceived decline in communities and 'people on the street' providing passive surveillance and so increasing stranger danger concerns (Tranter, 2006). The importance of 'eyes on the street' was raised by Jane Jacobs (1961) indicating the long recognised importance of active streets in improving real and perceived safety.

A Suite of ATS Programs

A range of ATS programs aimed at facilitating behaviour change have been developed and implemented nationally and internationally. Such programs include Walking School Bus (WSB), where children walk to school under adult supervision. The Ride2School program, run by Bicycle Network Victoria, aims to 'inspire students by showing them how easy, fun and energising it is to be active on the way to and from school' (Bicycle Victoria, 2010c). Federal programs include Safe Routes to School and school travel plans, which identify the best ATS routes with Council assistance. The VicHealth Streets Ahead program aims to increase ATS and requires council implementation. Crossing supervisors are also part funded by Councils and VicRoads to aid children crossing the road near to schools. These programs have been developed by state level agencies for ready implementation by local governments.

MODELS OF GOVERNANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION

Two conceptual models of the policy implementation process were used to guide the investigation. First, the *institutionalist* model focuses on an organisation's rationale for policy and program development and implementation. This rationale may not be easy to understand from the outside, as it is dependent on the internal culture in which the decisions are made. In this model, policy outcomes are seen in the context of 'messy dealings' (Hall, 2002) that comprise the complex interplay between existing policy goals and the actions of internal local government players including the CEO, senior managers and Councillors. This model is based on the research of May and Winter (2009) and their study of the implementation of social reform policy in Denmark. They found that successful implementation involves a complex interplay between policy and the multiple factors involved in creating action. Actual policy implementation is not reflected in the formal description of process so, in reality, at a local level, ATS policy implementation is not streamlined or rational. It is reflective of an intricate web of relationship dynamics between individual council managers and officers. This complex web is explained in the context of Glen Eira in Fig 2.

Second, the *policy-network* model draws attention to the relationship the local government officials have with external parties. In this model, policy decisions are made by a '...cluster of actors, each with a stake in a given policy sector and the capacity to determine policy success or failure...' (Peterson, 2003, p. 1). Understanding how these 'networks' are established, maintained, and, in some cases, changed, helps to explain the success or otherwise of particular ideas and the implementation of certain policies. Rhodes (1986, as cited in Rhodes & Marsh, 1992), developed a model of these arrangements and categorised policy 'communities'. The 'Rhodes Model' can be used to develop an understanding of policy development and implementation in Victoria.

Peterson (2003) in explaining policy networks, identifies three key variables which determine what type of policy network exists:

- Relative **stability** of a network's membership – do the same actors tend to dominate decision-making over time or is membership fluid and dependent on the specific policy issue under discussion?
- Network's relative **narrowness** – is it a group which excludes outsiders or is it highly permeable by a variety of actors with different objectives?
- Strength of resource **dependencies** – do network members depend heavily on each other for valued resources such as money, expertise and legitimacy or are most actors self-sufficient and thus relatively independent of one another?

ATS policy and program development and implementation at a state and level were examined in the context of these three questions.

Institutions and ATS Policy Networks in Victoria

Transport policy is developed by federal, state and local government and gives a higher priority to the safe and efficient movement of motorised modes of travel. For effective outcomes, a multi-faceted, coordination approach is required for increased ATS participation. The role of each level of government must be clearly defined. Inevitably, this is not the case with policy implemented through *messy dealings* of political process.

The range of policy networks identified in the research helps to account for the current policy outcomes. At the state government level, there is an emerging issue network that recognises the far reaching benefits of ATS. This network is contesting the *roads are for car traffic* philosophy that has long existed in Australian cities. The issue networks 'tend to disrupt established policy' and are 'led by experts who are different to

those with vested interests' (Rhodes & Marsh, 1992). The ATS issue network is having a profound impact on government policy. However, it appears that government agencies are yet to identify how best to implement the policy and programs promoted by the network.

Transport policy at the state level is mainly focused on motorised vehicles. There are two active transport strategies in place: Pedestrian Access Strategy and Victorian Bicycle Strategy, which have been allocated limited funding for programs and infrastructure. The Victorian Transport Plan (VTP) of the previous ALP government allocated \$115 million to cycling and walking for infrastructure development between 2008-2020 (State of Victoria, 2008). This was only 0.3% of the total VTP budget allocation of \$38 billion.

THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN FACILITATING ATS

Local government has a crucial role to play in increasing ATS. Existing federal and state policy identify the important role of local government in realising policy objectives. Active transport policy is poorly funded at all levels of Australian government. The federal cycling strategy is unfunded whilst the National Road Safety Strategy makes limited references to travel by active means. Both strategies show limited regard for ATS. Local government is entrusted with a critical role in national policy implementation. The federal institutional rationality for this delegation lies with local government being the tier of government, which, in theory, has the greatest awareness of their community and their needs.

Local government has responsibilities delegated by state government. Such delegations extend to implementing the Pedestrian Access Strategy and Victorian Bicycle Strategy. Funding opportunities are available to implement the strategies and to improve ATS infrastructure and facilitate greater participation.

The role of local government diversified following council amalgamations in 1994-95 (Department of Infrastructure and Transport, 2008). An outcome of these changes was an expectation that councils '...would have greater resources to manage more complex and diverse services and to engage in more difficult urban issues in a more sophisticated manner' (Stone, 2008, p. 110). ATS programs fall into this domain. However, the strategic direction of some councils including Glen Eira, has been to resist the diversification of responsibilities.

Glen Eira City Council resists many of the existing policy goals. In large part, the resistance is due to the culture within the institution, lack of clarity on the delegated responsibility of local government, and an aversion to cost shifting from other tiers of government.

Understanding issues in Glen Eira

The research was based on a review and analysis of policy relating to Active Transport to School (ATS) juxtaposed against a narrative of the behaviour and motives of policy makers, government and non-government organisations operating at a state scale. This narrative was assembled through interviews with local politicians, council employees, teachers and parents.

This research paper explores actor behaviour and institutional cultures in ATS policy implementation by the two middle-ring, middle income Melbourne municipalities of Boroondara and Glen Eira. Boroondara and Glen Eira Councils have the same federal and state policy frameworks influencing their strategic policy decisions. It is at the local-government scale that ATS programs, promoted by government and non-government agencies can be adopted. This paper examines the two local governments within the context of ATS policy and program implementation. Over the three-year period from 2008 to 2010, Boroondara experienced an eightfold increase in ATS participation whilst Glen Eira had a 23% decline (Bicycle Victoria, 2010b).

Glen Eira and Boroondara were selected for a comparative study because they are as similar as possible in all criteria except ATS performance.

Qualitative interviews were undertaken with fourteen key stakeholders. The interviewees were selected by their roles or their reputation for knowledge relating to ATS policies and programs. The findings from the interviews were analysed qualitatively using 'manifest content analysis' to highlight themes and issues that were explicitly mentioned by the interviewees (Mayring, 2000). Latent content analysis was used to highlight implicit and implied meaning in the interviews (ibid). The interview findings were contrasted and compared with policy and academic literature.

The purpose of the interviews was to develop an understanding of key policies, programs and their contextual implementation within Victoria with specific reference to Boroondara and Glen Eira. Identifying opportunities and constraints governing policy and program implementation was also addressed.

As highlighted by qualitative research literature, problems can occur if interviewees chose to give selective, exaggerated or otherwise distorted versions of events. This may occur due to the interviewee wanting to manage the impression given to the researcher or create a story (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) in which the accuracy of the specific details is less important than the point being made. As far as possible, the factual content of the interviews was triangulated by reference to policy, program documentation, other written material and quantitative data.

Boroondara's History

Boroondara was formed in 1994 following the merger of the Cities of Kew, Hawthorn and Camberwell. The first Council was elected in 1996 with 28 Councillors and nine Mayors serving over this period. As a local government, the Boroondara Councillors and their administrative support, including the CEO are relatively stable and have strong working relationships.

Glen Eira's Turbulent History

Glen Eira has had a short yet turbulent history. The first Glen Eira City Council was elected in 1997 following the merger of Moorabbin and Caulfield Councils in 1994 by the Kennett Government. Over the 13 year history of the council, it has been investigated by Inspector of Municipal Administration on three occasions. In 1998, the first of three investigations of the Council cited '...inadequacies in governance practices...' (Walsh, 1998). In 2000, the current CEO was appointed.

In 2003 the CEO served an 'Issue of Dispute' on the Council in an attempt to resolve a workplace disagreement. In 2005 the Council was investigated for a second time resulting in the four month suspension of all Councillors preceding elections in November 2005. Again, poor governance was cited and the reason for the effective dismissal of the Councillors (Whelan, 2005).

In 2010, following the controversial reappointment of the CEO for a two year term (normally four years), the Council was investigated for a third time. In response to dispute amongst the Councillors centring on the CEO's reappointment and third investigation, the Deputy Mayor resigned (Ling, 2010).

Over seven years since the second investigation, the same CEO is in place. Since the first Councillors were elected in 1997, there have been 28 Councillors and 12 Mayors serve in Glen Eira. It is reasonable to expect that new Councillors would not bring with them the same problems and agendas as their predecessors.

A request was made for the researcher to interview Glen Eira Council staff. The request was refused by the CEO ostensibly due to the perception of bias resulting from the researcher's involvement in local active travel advocacy groups. Interviews were conducted with two elected officials who shed light on the role of Councillors and Council Officers and their attitudes to ATS. Councillors are not subject to the CEOs restrictive powers and were willing to participate in the research. Interviews were also conducted with actors operating at the state scale including those from government and non-government organisations who have had working relationships and are familiar with the operations within Glen Eira. In addition, the researcher was engaged in research at Melbourne University and Curtin University of Technology involving Glen Eira. The work is yet to be published however, it is an extension of earlier research into land use and transport planning in Perth (Curtis & Armstrong, 2009). Although not drawing directly on this research, the institutional issues identified by interviewees corroborated.

The CEO at Glen Eira has an overriding influence on the activities within the Council. Theoretically, local government CEOs work for the Council and have the role of managing the council entity (Cetinic-Dorol, 2000). Although it is not unusual for conflict to arise between the CEO and Councillors, the conflict that has plagued Glen Eira City Council is extreme and has hindered the organisations ability to achieve its objectives. His stranglehold on the organisation is further reflected in the council's organisational chart (Fig 1).



(Glen Eira City Council, 2010c)

Fig 1: Organisational Chart for Glen Eira City Council

Institutional Culture

Glen Eira promotes itself as a 'low cost council' with an aversion to real or perceived cost shifting (Glen Eira City Council, 2008, p. 25; 2010a, p. 13; 2010b, p. 13). The council models itself on the traditional council with an emphasis on 'roads, rates and rubbish' (Glen Eira Councillor 1, 2010). They are involved in two programs with limited regard to ATS- part-funding (with VicRoads) school crossing supervisors and two (4% of schools) road safety audits are undertaken by traffic engineers around schools annually. Institutionally, the council is reticent to become involved in better facilitating ATS despite external funding opportunities with seed and match funding programs dominating funding opportunities for sustainable transport projects. The objective of such programs is to embed cultural change within institutions. As a local government, Glen Eira fears other tiers of government shifting responsibilities and costs onto local government so '...they won't, as a council, support an unfunded or defunded government programs...' (Glen Eira Councillor 2, 2010). This fear of cost shifting is common to many Victorian local governments, but it is used at Glen Eira as a device to avoid participation in programs that challenge the 'roads, rates and rubbish' mindset. This is a governance issue and stems from the institutional culture operating within Glen Eira.

Conflict over which tier of government should fund such programs raises the issue of delegated responsibility (Department of Transport Representative, 2010). Local governments were established by the state government and take on delegated responsibilities from the state (Australian Government, 2010). These delegations are not clearly defined and give rise to a grey area and the fear of cost shifting within Glen Eira.

The culture within an institution can be a barrier or facilitator of sustainable transport programs. Interviewees suggested the various departments within Glen Eira operate in a siloed or independent rather than integrated manner (National Bicycle Advocacy Group Representatives, 2010). This siloed approach includes a reluctance to engage external expertise. The unwillingness extends to the involvement of the local government in external funding programs such as Victorian Travel Smart programs, Supported Employment of Sustainable Transport Officers and Local Area Access Program. These programs require local governments to match funding from the state government. The institutional unwillingness to contribute adequately to such programs hampers program facilitation (State MP, 2010). This aversion to adequately fund programs has resulted in Glen Eira receiving the lowest Grants Commission funding per resident in Victoria (DPCD, 2010; Glen Eira City Council, 2010a), signifying a failure to utilise external funding opportunities for programs including ATS.

The approach to local governance in Glen Eira is in stark contrast to Boroondara. The institutional culture at Boroondara is one where the internal departments have an integrated approach to achieving outcomes and one where embracing external issues networks is accepted practice. The allocation of funds illustrates the priority given to capital works at Glen Eira compared to other programs such as ATS. Glen Eira allocated

34% of expenditure to capital works (Glen Eira City Council, 2010a) whilst Boroondara allocated 22% of total expenditure (Boroondara City Council, 2010b; Glen Eira City Council, 2010a). This allocation of funds illustrates the different priorities each local government has in prioritising funding for roads and programs such as ATS. These are ideological choices and illustrate the preferences of each local government. The philosophy at Glen Eira illustrates a preference for traditional modes of transport and the management of road congestion. As explained by one Council representative, '...the majority of people currently drive to schools...the Council...need(s) to manage that in the best way they can to make it safer and more efficient rather than working with people to get them out of the cars' (Glen Eira Councillor 2, 2010).

Boroondara is proactive in supporting sustainable transport. This progressive Council employs and fully funds two Sustainable Transport Officers. Another three officers across a number of departments have responsibility for liaising with schools; one officer is dedicated to increasing ATS participation in the local government area and seeks opportunities to enhance relationships with schools. Boroondara has seven different programs operating, each of which is funded in full or in part by Boroondara City Council.

Glen Eira has no officer responsible for liaising with schools. The one avenue of formal communication between schools and the local government, which is cited in council policy, was an annual School Principals forum is no longer conducted (Tang, 2010). Communication between schools and the local government in Glen Eira is dependent on informal discussions with Councillors, or on a request only basis (Tang, 2010).

Local Government has a powerful role to play in ATS policy and program development and implementation. State government departments provide the framework for other parts of state and local government to operate within (Department of Transport Representative, 2010). There is an expectation that all tiers of government work cooperatively with one and other; however, Glen Eira has a narrow view of its local government responsibilities and so has limited involvement in ATS programs.

Local governments do not operate in isolation; they are part of larger networks and communities. Boroondara exhibits a willingness to cooperate with other tiers of government and non-government organisations and are open to policy change and to adopting ATS programs. However, Glen Eira operates in a siloed and technocratic manner where outside expertise and funding opportunities are not utilised.

Individual Actors

Champions who work at challenging the focus on traditional modes of transport have an important role to play in achieving positive ATS outcomes. Councillors and CEOs can be facilitators for changing the focus from car centric transport planning to embracing sustainable and active travel. However, Councillors and CEOs can obstruct change. Both parties influence the culture within their local government.

Roads are for the fast and efficient movement of cars

Strategy within Glen Eira exhibits a desire to resist change and continue with a business as usual approach where roads are for cars. The unwillingness to invest time and money into programs facilitating alternate modes of travel illustrates the higher priority given to motorised travel. This is despite traffic congestion being a concern cited by the community and in strategic policy documents (Glen Eira City Council, 2008).

Glen Eira has the fourth lowest per capita expenditure on bicycle infrastructure in Victoria. The 2010 expenditure of just \$2.91 per capita on bicycle infrastructure was in contrast to Boroondara at \$6.51 per capita (Bicycle Victoria, 2010a). The total capital expenditure in Glen Eira in 2010-11 was forecast to be \$47 million, with 19% allocated to the renewal and upgrade of roads. Only 0.2% of the budget is allocated to bicycle lanes, 2% to pedestrian safety and 0.03% to 'upgrade of safety treatments around schools' (Glen Eira City Council, 2010b). In the same budget period, Boroondara allocated about 4% of their capital works budget to active travel infrastructure (Boroondara City Council, 2010b).

Institutional willingness to challenge the roads are for cars storyline

Policy at federal and state level provides local government with the framework and tools for ATS programs. At the state government level, policy and programs are at times in conflict with greater ATS participation. Discord exists between state and local government regarding delegated responsibilities. Both Glen Eira and Boroondara City Councils cited cost shifting as a concern (Boroondara City Council, 2010b; Glen Eira City Council, 2008, 2010a, 2010b). At Glen Eira, the 'cost shifting' storyline has been institutionalised and used as a justification for not implementing policy outside roads, rates and rubbish.

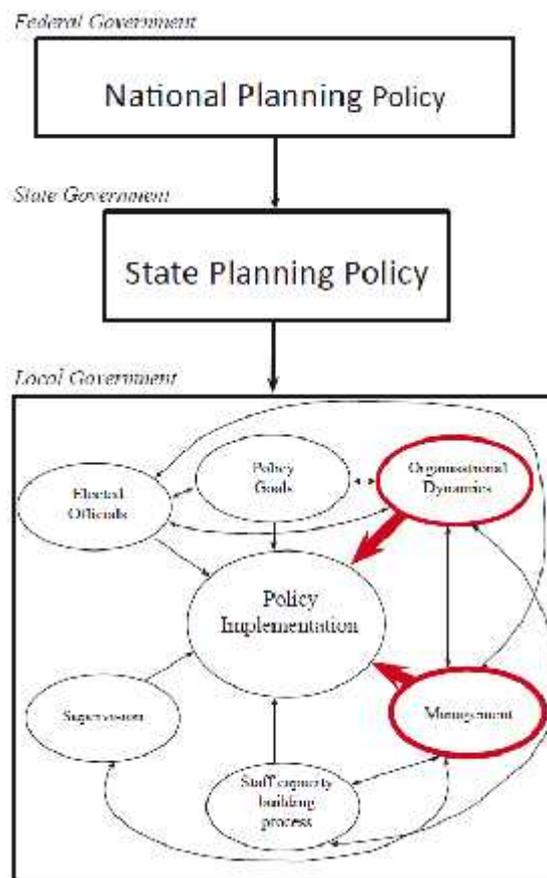
By contrast, Boroondara City Council has adopted a proactive approach to greater ATS participation. Policy, programs and infrastructure changes have been implemented with external funding opportunities utilised.

The policy networks surrounding ATS implementation in Glen Eira and Boroondara are very different.

Glen Eira City Council

The low ATS participation rates in Glen Eira have resulted in road congestion around schools. The institutional rationality for not implementing ATS programs is that local government is not responsible for ATS programs despite policy contesting this approach.

Policy networks and individuals exerting power and influence are evident within Glen Eira City Council. The CEO is the central figure of the policy network within the Council. Policy implementation through the *Messy Dealings Approach* (Fig 2) provides a powerful explanation for why Glen Eira has such weak ATS outcomes. Some parties can more readily influence policy implementation within a policy network than others. Within Glen Eira, the CEO and his senior managers are the most influential, whilst elected officials, whose role is to represent community needs and interests are generally supportive of ATS yet their input is nullified.



Based on: May & Winter, 2009

Fig 2: Messy dealings within Glen Eira City Council

Glen Eira City Council is an example of a technocratic community network (see Fig 3). Such networks resist policy change including the implementation of delegated responsibilities such as ATS programs. The Council uses cost shifting as an excuse within the institution to account for the local government's reluctance to engage in ATS programs. However, funding is allocated to a number of programs which although beneficial to the community, do not fall within the *tradition council* realm. These programs include aged care facilities, an arts program, and business development programs.

Based on Peterson's (2003) policy network variables, Glen Eira is a stable policy network in which the same actors dominate decision making (Fig 3). Outsiders are not encouraged to engage with the local government nor are outsiders actively invited to provide input. In Fig 3, a comparison is made between Glen Eira, Boroondara and the emerging state issues network.

ATS is recognised as having wide-ranging benefits. Such benefits are acknowledged by Glen Eira Councillors who suggest that most, if not all, council officers also recognise them. Yet with the institutional

rationality that ATS is not a responsibility of local government, the Glen Eira policy network is opposed to fulfilling its delegated responsibilities to facilitate ATS programs. By contrast, Boroondara City Council acknowledges the benefits of ATS for individuals and community. The result is council officers dedicated to policy and program implementation, traffic calming measures and higher ATS participation. Boroondara is achieving better ATS outcomes than Glen Eira.

Boroondara

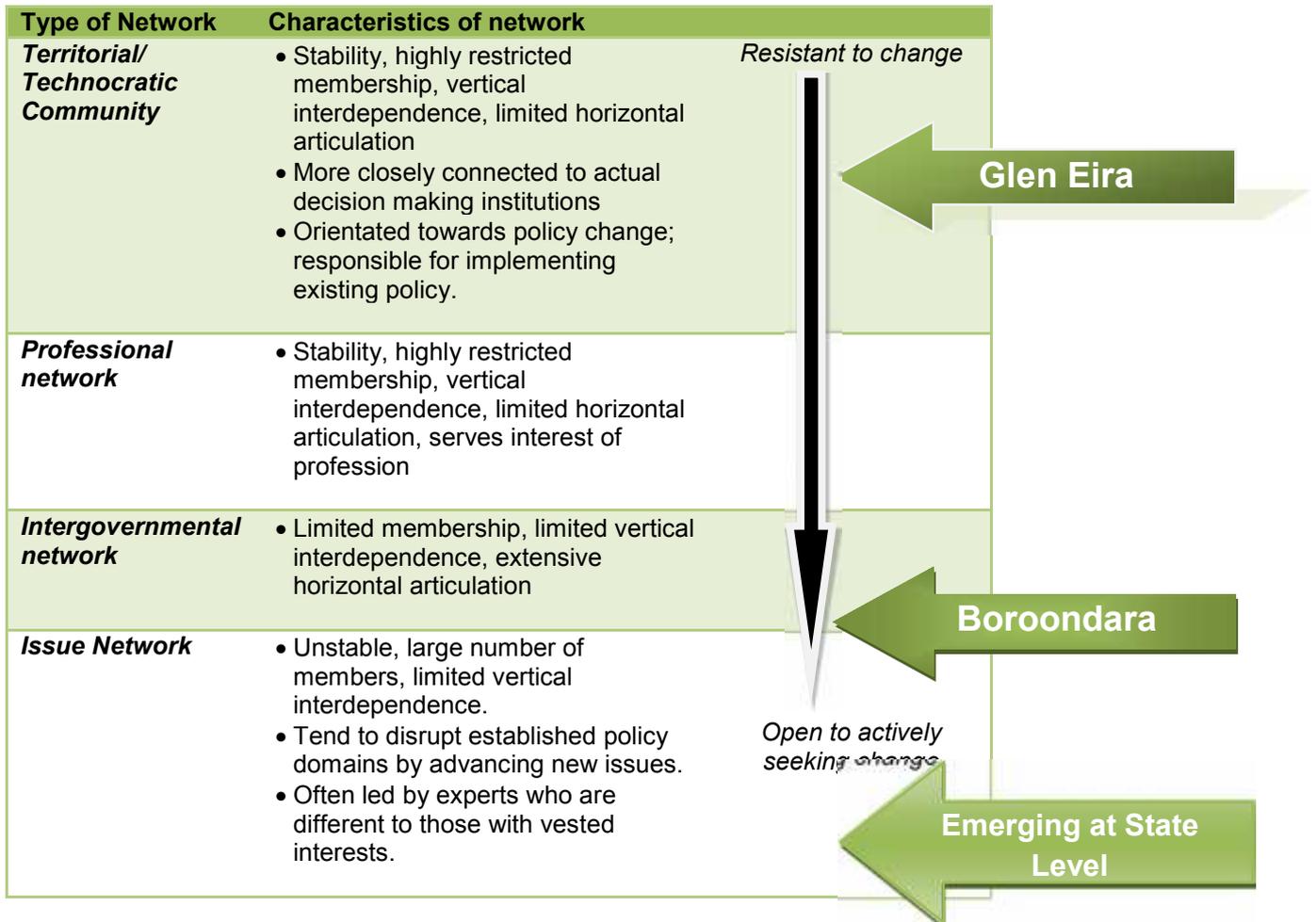
Boroondara City Council is proactive in advocating and facilitating ATS. The Council and Councillors have an established relationship with the emerging state level issues network (Fig) and are challenging the existing storyline *roads are for cars*. There are at least seven ATS programs being co-ordinated by the council, and local government policy support for ATS programs. Boroondara further distinguishes itself from Glen Eira as they have two Sustainable Transport Officers; one of whom is dedicated to promoting ATS. An additional two officers have strong and direct relationships with schools within the municipality. In comparison, Glen Eira do not have a Sustainable Transport Officer nor do they have direct dealings with schools; despite policy advocating such. Schools are not part of Glen Eira City Council's policy network.

The decision making process within Boroondara appears more streamlined than at Glen Eira. The council departments and officers work in a manner complementary to one and other with knowledge sharing and joint objectives. It is also clearly stated that '... the Administration's role is to advise Council, implement decisions of Council and deliver services...' (Boroondara City Council, 2010a). This is a typical 'managerialist approach' whereby the board, in this case the councillors, set the direction and the administration executes the wishes of the Councillors. In the case of Boroondara, the Councillors are supported by the council officers (administrators including CEO) in establishing an issue network. The role of council administration is not clearly apparent at Glen Eira. The role of the Councillors and CEO in policy documentation at Glen Eira is vague to maximise the power of the CEO in determining the direction the council will take.

Variable	Criteria	Glen Eira	Boroondara	Emerging State Level Issues Network
Stability	Same actors <i>dominate decision making over time.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEO and management have a strong presence in decision making nb. 'low cost council', aversion to 'cost shifting from other tiers of government'. • 'Cost shifting' is a defence for maintaining the status quo of 'roads are for traffic' storyline. 		
	Fluid membership <i>dependent on specific policy issues under discussion</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Input from council officers invited • Councillors support ATS & support role of Sustainable Transport Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation invited from a range of parties with an interest in ATS
Narrowness	Group which excludes others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No formal relationship with schools • Community advocates not embraced 		
	Highly permeable by a variety of actors with different objectives		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council open to financing Sustainable Transport Officers • Continual relationship with schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Input from a range of experts
Dependencies	Network members depend heavily on each other for valued resources such as money, expertise, legitimacy		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult externally • Strong relationship with BV 	
	Most actors self sufficient & relatively independent of one and other?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reticent to consult external parties with expertise. • Low levels of external funding (failure to match fund & resist seed funding) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experts work in a range of organisations and are independent of each other but come together informally to promote change

Based on Peterson (2003)

Fig 3: Comparative Analysis of Glen Eira & Boroondara Policy Networks



Based on: Campbell, J. C., Baskin, M. A., Baumgartner, F. R., & Halpern, N. P., 1989; Rhodes & Marsh, 1992

Fig 4: The 'Rhodes Model' of Policy Communities in Victoria, Glen Eira & Boroondara

ATS POLICY, PROGRAMS AND GOVERNANCE

Policy and programs are in place to facilitate ATS in Victoria. Active transport policies exist at national and state government tiers however; local government responsibility for policy implementation appears to be discretionary. State government, through strategies and statutory regulation provide the framework and tools from which other state government bodies and local government implement policies and programs. For ATS programs, policies are the framework and funding opportunities are the tools.

In Victoria, ATS infrastructure and programs are generally part-funded by state government. Such funding is available to local government in the form of match and seed funding. Currently, state government policy network focuses on the Department of Transport however, for greater success; this network must extend to include Department of Health (DoH), Department of Education (DoE), Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) as well as the Treasury Department.

Local government is the tier closest to the community and most able to represent community interests and needs. Active transport policy at a state and national level cite the important role of local government in implementing the strategies. Funding opportunities are available for councils to aid in policy and program implementation. Councils such as Boroondara are implementing these strategies and optimising funding opportunities and experiencing desirable outcomes.

Glen Eira City Council operates a technocratic network community resistant to policy change and external input. By contrast, Boroondara City Council is receptive to change and readily interacts with the *emerging*

state level ATS issue network. Boroondara has growing ATS participation facilitated by local government programs whilst ATS participation in Glen Eira fluctuates and is dependent on champions external to the Council.

Glen Eira City Council uses the institutional rationale against cost shifting as their justification for not implementing ATS programs. Boroondara cites the same concern with cost shifting, but, as an institution, it is prepared to challenge the storyline that *roads are for cars* and implement ATS policies and programs as the community benefits are recognised. The Glen Eira City Council mindset is that *roads are for cars* and is resistant to policy change incorporating ATS. Decision-making is strongly influenced by the CEO who is an advocate for Councils adhering to their traditional roles. Glen Eira would benefit from embracing new responsibilities and the potential opportunities.

At the state level, an ATS issues network is evolving. This network is seeking to contest traditional thinking about transport. This issues network has facilitated a change in policy at the state government level with the passing of the Integrated Transport Act 2010, in conjunction with the Victorian Transport Plan (2008), Victorian Bicycle Strategy and Pedestrian Access Strategy; greater regard *should* now be given to active transport in Victoria. The Integrated Transport Act 2010 recognises that active travel is a legitimate mode of transport. These strategies, the VTP and Transport Act were developed by the previous state government for implementation by both state and local government agencies.

Local government is the level of government most able to implement ATS policies and programs. For the Glen Eira community to experience the benefits of increased ATS participation, a shift in the operations of the local government is required. The Council would benefit from operating in a less siloed manner and being receptive to external ideas and approaches by engaging with the *external ATS issues network*. Integrating active travel and ATS into council policies and strategies would help facilitate greater ATS participation. Local government has an important role to play in facilitating community behaviour change.

Local government is the tier of government best equipped to respond to the needs of their community by policy, program implementation and advocacy work. The relationship between councils and their communities, including their school communities, has the capacity to either facilitate ATS or create barriers to increased ATS participation. Communities find other ways of implementing change if Council is disinterested. Champions and organisations attempt to fill the void of Council. The absence of local government action is not fully overcome by individual people and organisations operating in isolation. Local government has an important role to play. Car dominance within Glen Eira will continue due to the unwillingness to implement disincentives for car travel and facilitate ATS.

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